Data Sharing and Data Management Policy

I. Background

At the 16th Intergovernmental Meeting, APN adopted its Data Sharing and Data Management Policy. The present document outlines APN policies for dissemination and sharing of **APN-Funded Data** (for definition, refer to A of II. General Policies on Data) through the proposal review process; through award negotiations and conditions; and through appropriate support and incentives for data clean-up, documentation dissemination, documentation storage, etc.

II. General policies on data

APN is increasingly funding projects and activities that develop and deploy new systems that collect increasing amounts of data for research. Therefore, APN aims to ensure that all data that is generated using an APN Grant is shared with science, policy, end-user and other relevant communities in a timely manner. APN strongly believes that significant results of the research it sponsors should be submitted promptly for publication to ensure that the widest possible scientific community is able to benefit from this research. In line with this policy, APN considers it essential for scientists worldwide to be able to utilise Project/Activity data for their future research. To this end, this section aims to encourage open access to and sharing of data, and to strengthen data distribution (hubs, portals, etc.).

The present policy shall be implemented from April 15, 2011 and will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Scientific Planning Group (SPG) of APN.

A. Definition of APN-Funded Data

APN-Funded Data is defined as: Data, datasets, data products that have been "collected/acquired and manipulated/processed," or "generated" through a Project/Activity, whether partially or fully funded by APN. Data that is "collected" or "acquired" from another source is not considered, in itself, to be APN-Funded Data.

B. Validation/standardisation of APN-Funded Data

APN is very careful about the quality of data labelled **APN-Funded Data** and how such data is portrayed and, while APN recognises that there have been excellent efforts to generate data, data that is not validated may result in invalid conclusions. The Project Leader is responsible for validating or standardising **APN-Funded Data** in accordance with international standards. Written evidence of validation or standardisation must be lodged with the APN Secretariat, in accordance with the conditions outlined in the **Contract Documentation**.

C. Accessibility to and management of APN-Funded Data

APN-Funded Data must be fully available to any party that seeks it for scientific research purposes. This should be understood as a process of "open access" in terms of **APN-Funded**

Data acquirement. While it is understood that there may be marginal costs incurred in the process of acquirement, the process itself should not be cumbersome.

APN will maintain a database of outputs accessible via the APN website that provides basic information, in other words, metadata, on how to access **APN-Funded Data** from an APN Project/Activity. To facilitate this, the Project Leader, as a condition of the APN Grant, will complete a standardised metadata form that will allow the APN Secretariat to facilitate access to and sharing of **APN-Funded Data**. This form is accessible on the APN website or can be obtained from the APN Secretariat.

The APN Secretariat will not be a data centre or data storage hub but will instead provide information on the APN website on how **APN-Funded Data** can be acquired. If a Project Leader has any concerns about this, they should contact the APN Secretariat.

III. Proposal and Project/Activity requirements

A. APN proposals and proponent requirements

In the interests of the greatest benefit in the shortest time for the greatest number of countries in the region, the best proposals will promote better data collection, generation, analysis and dissemination, open access to **APN-Funded Data** and access to research materials and sites.

The Guide for Proponents in all APN Calls for Proposals requires that a proposal sets forth a plan for preservation, documentation and sharing of data, samples, physical collections, curriculum materials and other related research, and capacity development, training and education materials. Each such plan should identify the responsibilities in this respect of the Project Leader and each Collaborator who is expected to be involved in the collection of Project/Activity data. Plans for handling what will become **APN-Funded Data**, as well as other materials mentioned in the present paragraph, will be considered during the proposal review process.

B. APN Projects/Activities and Project Leader requirements

Before a Contract is signed, the Project Leader, as a condition of the APN Grant, will:

1. Be responsible for meeting all legal requirements of the country or countries in which data is to be collected/acquired or generated.
2. Ensure that all clearances and necessary certifications for the work to be undertaken are agreed upon in advance of implementing the Project/Activity to ensure there is no conflict with national data policies.
3. Ensure that, once **APN-Funded Data** becomes available, there are no additional barriers to be overcome in order for the **APN-Funded Data** to be openly available as outlined in C. of II. General Policies on Data.

Upon Project/Activity completion and before any final instalment of the APN Grant is remitted, the Project Leader will:

1. Validate or standardise **APN-Funded Data** according to international standards and provide written evidence of such validation or standardisation to the APN Secretariat, in accordance with the conditions outlined in Contract Documentation.
2. Complete a standardised metadata form that will allow the APN Secretariat to facilitate access to and sharing of **APN-Funded Data** by sharing the information on the APN website.
3. Ensure that **APN-Funded Data** collected in conjunction with the Project/Activity is archived in a manner that will allow open access to **APN-Funded Data**, whether collected by the Project Leader or the Collaborators, even in a situation where the Project Leader or Collaborators no longer work at the institution where **APN-Funded Data** was originally generated.

C. Data sharing and data management policy: Non-compliance

The Co-Chairs of the SPG and the Capacity Development Committee (CDC) will be charged with any issues of non-compliance with the Data Sharing and Data Management Policy and report to the Steering Committee, which will determine a course of action, as necessary.

D. Data sharing and data management policy: Revisions

To ensure a robust and updated policy, all members will participate in issues regarding the Data Sharing and Data Management Policy and, until such issues are resolved, the SPG and CDC Co-Chairs will continue to recommend revisions, as necessary, and report to the Steering Committee.

E. Disclaimer

While APN encourages open access to data, APN is not responsible for ensuring the integrity of the data produced. APN and its member countries make no warranty, expressed, endorsed or implied, with respect to the data produced from the Project/Activity.